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VOC FOR IOP/FN
NEWS ANALYSIS 1-1219 AUGUST 6, 1976
WILLIAM KARPPI

KEKKONEN VISIT

ANNCR:

PRESIDENT URHO KEKKONEN OF FINLAND HAS COMPLETED A VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES...AND VOA'S WILLIAM KARPPI HAS THESE THOUGHTS ON THE OCCASION.

VOICE:

PRESIDENT KEKKONEN'S VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES IS ANOTHER REMINDER OF THE INFLUENCE SMALL COUNTRIES ARE ABLE TO EXERT IN WORKING FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE. PRESIDENT FORD TOOK NOT OF THIS AT THE OUTSET OF THE TWO-DAY STATE VISIT TO WASHINGTON. "FINLAND," HE SAID, "HAS PROVEN BEYOND ANY DOUBT WHATSOEVER IN RECENT YEARS THAT A SMALL COUNTRY CAN MAKE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO WORLD PEACE AND WORLD UNDERSTANDING OF FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE TO BOTH OF OUR NATIONS." THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT CITED FINLAND'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO U.N. PEACE-KEEPING FORCES AND ITS ROLE AS HOST BOTH TO STRATEGIC ARMS NEGOTIATIONS AND ALSO TO THE CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE.

NEWSMEN HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO QUESTION THE FINNISH LEADER, AND THEY WERE PRIMARILY CONCERNED ABOUT THE DEGREE OF SOVIET INLUENCE ON FINNISH LIFE. PRESIDENT KEKKONEN WAS OBVIOUSLY PREPARED FOR THIS AND GAVE CONVINCING REASSURANCE THAT FINLAND'S WESTERN-STYLE DEMOCRACY HAS NOT BEEN COMPROMISED. HE SAID FINLAND SHOULD NOT BE PITIED BECAUSE OF ITS IMAGINED ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON THE SOVIET UNION. IN FACT, HE SAID THAT BECAUSE ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH THE SOVIET UNION IS ADVANTAGEOUS TO IT, FINLAND WANTS FURTHER TO EXPAND IT. BUT HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT HIS COUNTRY HAS BROAD COMMERCIAL TIES ALSO WITH THE WEST, THROUGH THE EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION, THE EUROPEAN COMMON MARKET, AND THE ORGANIZATION OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT.

THE FINNISH LEADER WAS ALSO ASKED ABOUT PRESS CENSORSHIP, TO PREVENT FINNS FROM OFFENDING THE SOVIET UNION. PRESIDENT KEKKONEN PROVIDED A DEFINITIVE ANSWER. HE SAID FLATLY THERE IS NOT PRESS CENSORSHIP IN FINLAND. BUT HE EXPLAINED THAT UNDENIABLY THERE IS SELF-CONTROL BASED ON THE MOTIVE OF NATIONAL SELF-PROTECTION. HE FURTHER EXPLAINED THAT THOSE BOOKS PUBLISHED IN THE FINNISH LANGUAGE WHICH HAVE DISREGARDED THIS PRINCIPLE HAVE NOT SERVED FINNISH ASPIRATIONS TO LIVE IN PEACE AND FREEDOM.

UNDERLYING PRESIDENT KEKKONEN'S VISIT WAS A RECOGNITION OF THE BASIC COMMON GOALS OF BOTH THE AMERICAN AND FINNISH PEOPLES. HE REFERRED TO THE U.S. DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE -- THE FOREMOST DOCUMENT IN AMERICAN HISTORY. AND HE SAID THE WORLD HAS NO BETTER GUIDELINES FOR THE FUTURE THAN THE RIGHTS OF MAN AS EXPRESSED IN THAT DECLARATION.

PRESIDENT KEKKONEN'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON WAS CERTAINLY NOT THE MOST GLITTERING OF THE MANY BICENTENNIAL VISITS THIS YEAR, BUT IT DID SERVE TO CALL ATTENTION ONCE AGAIN TO THE ENDURING HOPE FOR SMALL DEMOCRATIC NATIONS SUBJECTED TO UNRELENTING EXTERNAL PRESSURES.

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